

## The Intelligencer.

OFFICE: No. 15 Quincy Street.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1871.

## THE PUBLIC LANDS.

The Bounty Bill before Congress.

BENWOOD, MARSHALL CO., W. VA., February 3, 1871.

To the Editors of the Intelligencer:

In your paper of February 1st, under Congressional proceedings of January 31st, we see a bill passed the reference to which you had enclosed, which we should like to have a little light upon, and know of no way better than to ask you to give it through your columns.

1st. What advantage is in this bill over the Homestead Law?

2nd. Can a soldier that has taken advantage of the homestead, still have the benefits of this, or if he has not taken the homestead can he still have the advantages of both?

3rd. Or has Congress just got this up to throw sand into the eyes of the people so as to grant some railroad a continent, or as they did with the one hundred dollars bounty, give the soldier one hundred acres of land for his services?

4th. We believe in giving railroads land enough to encourage them to push into the new countries for we are all benefitted by it, but do not think it right to give each stockholder a fortune and enough to build the road besides, and we have been promised to see that that has been your plan.

You will please find a short piece cut out of the Cincinnati Times. What is to be done in that case. Now please allow a suggestion, say that if a soldier takes advantage of the homestead law then allow the additional land and not otherwise, and the understanding at the same time that he is not to dispose of it for a certain time, which would keep it out of the hands of speculators, and induce a great many to go out of our towns and cities to where they would be better off.

Hoping you will give your views we sign ourselves (OLD UNION SOLDIERS).

The best answer to these inquiries is the bill itself, and we here append it, just as it passed the House on the 31st ult.

A BILL, to enable honorably discharged soldiers and sailors, their widows and orphan children, to acquire homesteads on the public lands of the United States.

That every private soldier and officer who has served in the army of the United States during the recent rebellion for ninety days, and who was honorably discharged, and has remained loyal to the Government, including the troops mustered into the service of the United States by virtue of the third section of an act entitled an act making appropriations for completing the defenses of Washington, and for other purposes, approved Feb. 13, 1862, and every seaman, marine, and officer or other person, who has served in the navy of the United States, or in the marine corps, during the rebellion, for ninety days, and who was honorably discharged, and has remained loyal to the Government, shall, on compliance with the provisions of an act entitled "An act to secure homesteads to actual settlers on the public domain," and the acts amendatory thereof, as hereinafter modified, be entitled to enter upon and receive patents for a quantity of public lands, not mineral, not exceeding 160 acres (or one quarter section) to be taken in compact form, according to legal subdivisions, including the alternate reserved sections of public lands along the line of any railroad, or other public work, or other lands subject to entry under the Homestead laws, in the United States, wherever public lands have been or may be granted by acts of Congress, provided that said homestead settler shall be allowed twelve months after locating his homestead within which to commence his settlement and improvements, and provided that any homestead settler who has not made any assignment of his homestead certificate within twelve months from the date thereof to any citizen of the United States over twenty-one years of age, or person who has declared his intention to become such, who has not previously availed himself of the benefits of the Homestead act, and who has not been previously assigned to the public domain, and said settler shall succeed to all the rights of the said homestead settler, but no such assignor of a homestead certificate shall thereafter have the right to avail himself of the benefit of this act or other acts heretofore passed granting homesteads to actual settlers, nor shall such assignor have the right to acquire any other homestead under said acts; provided, however, that no patent shall issue to a homestead settler or his assignee who has not resided upon, improved and cultivated his said homestead for a period of at least two years, except as provided in section 4 of this act.

Sec. 2. And be it further enacted, That any person entitled, under the provisions of the foregoing section, to enter a homestead, who may have heretofore entered under the Homestead laws a quantity of land less than 160 acres, shall be permitted to enter under the provisions of this act, much land as he may desire, so that the quantity previously entered, shall not exceed 160 acres.

Sec. 3. And be it further enacted, That in case of the death of any person who would be entitled to a homestead under this act, his widow, if unmarried, or in case of his death or marriage, then his minor or orphan children shall be entitled to all the benefits enumerated in this act; provided, that if such person died during his term of enlistment, the whole term of his enlistment shall be deducted from the time heretofore required to perfect the title.

Sec. 4. And be it further enacted, That every private soldier and every seaman, marine and officer who served in the army and navy for the said period of ninety days, and is now inscribed on the pension rolls of the United States, or is entitled to be so inscribed on account of wounds received or disabilities incurred, or in case of death or marriage, then his minor or orphan children shall be entitled to all the benefits enumerated in this act; provided, that if such person died during his term of enlistment, the whole term of his enlistment shall be deducted from the time heretofore required to perfect the title.

Sec. 5. And be it further enacted, That the Commissioner of the General Land Office shall have authority to make all needful rules and regulations to carry into effect the provisions of this act.

Some of the important differences between this and the Homestead law may be pointed out. The homestead law grants to any citizen of the United States, of either sex, over 21, (who was not engaged in the rebellion) 160 acres of \$1.25 land, or 80 acres of \$3.50 land, (the latter being the price of the reserved sections where alternate sections have been granted.) Under this bill the grant is limited to the soldiers and seamen honorably discharged after a certain term of service, who may take up 160 acres, whether of reserved sections or not. Where the settler can find reserved land he gets twice as much value as under the homestead act.

Under the homestead law the settler gets no title till he has lived on the land five years, and abandonment of residence on the land for more than six months during that period forfeits the land. Under this bill the settler must maintain a residence on the land five years, less the period of his service in the army or navy. But if he chooses, he may assign his certificate of entry immediately, and the assignee gets a patent when he has lived on the land two years. Practically, therefore, the residence is reduced to two years.

But an exception in the matter of residence is made in favor of pensioners, who get the quarter section of land and acquire title without any actual residence on the land at all, transacting the business through an agent or attorney.

It will be seen where the beneficiary of this bill had taken up land under the Homestead Act, but less than 160 acres, he may take up under this act enough to bring it up to that area.

Some portions of the bill are obscurely worded, no doubt with design; but these are the leading objects which we judge it is designed to accomplish by those who originated it. The debate in the House showed the bill to be capable of different constructions. Mr. HAYLEY, of Illinois, declared it was a cunningly devised scheme to give the public lands to capitalists and speculators, without any practical benefit to those for whose ostensible benefit the bill was framed. Mr. GARFIELD was very dubious about the provisions for assigning titles. Mr. VAN WREN, of New York, thought the bill would be of no real benefit to the soldiers. Nevertheless, only two votes in the whole House were cast against it on its passage—the members evidently being afraid to vote against anything that professed to be designed for the benefit of soldiers, although their judgments might condemn it as accomplishing a very different purpose.

Whether this bill will confer on the ostensible objects of its bounty benefits adequate to what it will cost the Government, each can judge best for himself. For ourselves we doubt it. Former experience with bounty land gifts has demonstrated that those to whom they are given realize very little benefit. Nine tenths of all the bounty land warrants ever issued went into the hands of speculators, the original recipients getting the smallest part of its value.

The number of pensioners is in round numbers 200,000. To them this bill will give 32,000,000 acres of public land, without any requirement of actual settlement. Nine tenths of this land will go at a nominal price to speculators. It is estimated that the operation of the bill will absorb 395,000,000 more, making 427,000,000 acres in all. Add to this the 225,000,000 already granted to railroads, and more than half the arable part of the public domain will have been given away. If the giving away of this four hundred and twenty-seven millions of acres would secure the settlement of even a half or a third of it, the gift would not be lost; but we do not believe one-fourth of it will go into the hands of actual settlers as the direct result of this gift. Every acre of public lands that goes into the hands of corporations and speculators is a hardship imposed on the generations who are to look to the public domain for future homes; for just in that proportion will the price to them be increased. When that domain can be bought only from those who have monopolized its millions, the buyers will have to pay just what the monopolists see fit to charge.

The public lands should only be given away with the wisest discretion. Such a discretion is found in the homestead law. Every man who wants it can secure enough land for a home free of charge under that law, on conditions quite as liberal as the government ought to make them. To give any more of the public lands away for any other purpose than actual settlement, or to make the conditions more lax for that purpose, is a very questionable policy, to say the least. But as long as members of Congress are free to give away what does not belong to them, either from pecuniary motives or because it makes them a temporary popularity with numerous classes who are the objects of their bounty, as in the case under consideration—just so long will every scheme to squander the public patrimony succeed till nothing is left to be squandered.

A BILL was introduced in the Senate, last Wednesday, by Mr. APPLEBATE, to amend the charter of the Pan Handle Railroad Company.

Sec. 5. And be it further enacted, That all declarations of intent to acquire homesteads to actual settlers, who may be taken before the Judge or Clerk of any Court of Record in the United States, or in any State or Territory, and when duly authenticated under the official seal of such Court, shall be of the same force and effect as if taken before the Register or Receiver of the proper Land Office.

Sec. 6. And be it further enacted, That the Commissioner of the General Land Office shall have authority to make all needful rules and regulations to carry into effect the provisions of this act.

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## SPECIAL NOTICES.

## THE LATEST AND CHOICEST.

SEA MOSS FARMING—Said to be very fine for Drovers and an elegant dairy stock for the farmer.

COOK'S SPARKLING GELATINE—An old reliable for the hotel and family.

SUPERIOR BERRY WINE—Just the article for the hotel and family.

BAKERS' COCOA—Warranted Pure, a delicious food for the hotel and family.

HICKER'S FARINA—Prepared especially for invalids and children.

ANGUSTURA—A genuine article for ladies and children in feeble health.

WINE OF PERSIN—The most perfect remedy for indigestion and dyspepsia.

CORN STARCH—For puddings and custards.

TAPIOCA—Such as dessert, either alone or with berries.

LAUGHLIN DRUGS, & CO'S., Wholesale Distributors, Main St.

DR. SCHENCK ADVISES CONSUMPTIVES TO GO TO FLORIDA IN WINTER.

Having for the last thirty-five years devoted my whole time to the study of the human system, I feel that I understand fully the course that ought to be pursued to restore a totally debilitated and languid system to health.

The first and most important step is for the patient to avoid taking cold, and the best of all ways to do this is to go to Florida in winter, where the temperature is regular, and the air pure and bracing.

A good hotel is kept there by Petermann, and a vast number of new and comfortable houses have been built there, and who, under the healing influence of the climate and my medicine, will be able to take up their abode there.

One hundred miles further down the river is a point which I would prefer to Palatka, as a vast number of the human system are diseased there, and it is a point I can recommend.

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